CHAPTER XV

The Prince with his English and Gason army moved swiftly southward in battle array and Sir Nigel having reruited his ranks with the two hundred members of the original White Company, from the woods near Montpezard, joined the army and received the honorable commission from the Prince, to push ahead into Spain and liscover the location and strength of the Spanish and French army under tle band wound through the passes of earl; for they do not know that there Navarre and into the rugged land of

Sir Nigel had with him Sir William Felton, Sir Oliver Buttesthorn, stout old Sir Simon Burley, the Scotch knight errant, the Earl of Angus, and Sir Richard Causton, all accounted among the avest knights in the army, together with sixty veteran men-at-arms, and aree hundred and twenty archers. Spies had been sent out in the morning, and returned after night-fall to say that the King of Spain was encamped some Burgos, having with him twenty thousand horse and forty-five thousand foot. A dry-wood fire had been lit, and round this the leaders crouched, the glare beating upon their rugged faces, while the hardy archers lounged and chatted amid the tethered horses, while they

munched their scanty provisions.
"For my part," said Sir Simon Burlev. I am of the opinion that we have already done that which we have come For do we not now know where the king is, and how great a following he hath, which was the end of our jour-

"True," answered Sir William Felton, but I have come on this venture because it is a long time since I have broken a spear in war, and, certes, I shall not go back until I have run a

ourse with some cavalier of Spain."
"I will not leave you. Sir William." returned Sir Simon Burley; "and yet, as an old soldier and one who hath seen much of war. I cannot but think that it is an ill thing for four hundred men of sixty thousand on the one side and a broad river on the other."

"Yet," said Sir Richard Causton, "we cannot for the honor of England go nck without a blow struck."

"Nor for the honor of Scotland, either," cried the Earl of Angus. "By Saint Paul! you have spoken ery well," said Sir Nigel, "and I have

Iways heard that there were very worthy gentlemen among the Scots. fine skirmishing to be had upon their border. Bethink you, Sir Simon, All night they led their horses,

tumbling and groping through wild following the guidance of a frightened peasant who was strapped by the wrist to Black Sin's stirrup-leather. With the early

accents dropped upon his knees, scream-

ing loudly for mercy.
"How comes it. dog?" asker Sir Willlake not, it is Don Diego Alvarez, who was once at the prince's court."
"It is indeed I," said the Spanish knight. "I trust that I am now the

"By the sweet Virgin! By the blessed Mother of God!" cried the trembling peasant, "I swear to you that in the darkness I have myself lost the path, deep rolling of drums and the clashing of cymbals, all sounding together in one deafening uproar. Knights and archers sprang to arms, convinced mand?" asked the Spaniard.

Big John scratched his red head and

over a low ridge at the further end. I led them into a short valley with stream purling down the centre of it. and a very thick growth of elder and box upon either side. Pushing their way through the dense brushwood, they

In front of them lay a broad plain

watered by two winding streams and covered with grass, stretching away to where, in the furthest distance towers of Burgos bristled up against the light blue morning sky. Over all this vast meadow there lay a great city of tents-thousands upon thousands of them, laid out in streets and squares like a well-ordered town. High silken pavillons or colored marquees, shooting up from among the crowd of meaner dwellings, marked where the great lords and barons of Leon and Castile men lay in the sheltered gorge, look displayed their standards, while over ing down upon the vast host of their the white roofs, as far as eye could unconscious enemies. The sun had with the royal arms of Castile waving from the summit, announced that the ion to attempt a small deed, and I ask

of his warriors. ight, they could see that the vast army n front of them was already afoot. The irst pink light of the rising sun glittered upon the steel caps and breastplates of dense masses of slingers and rossbowmen, who drilled and marched n the spaces which had been left for their exercise. A thousand columns "You will see anon, and smoke reeked up into the pure but a trifling matter. norning air where the faggots were and the camp-kettles already lins, after the fashion which the Spanish had adopted from their Moorish enemies All along by the sedgy banks of the rivers long lines of pages led are Englishmen. Say no word to any their masters' chargers down to water. whom we may meet, and, if any speak while the knights themselves lounged of their pavillons, or rode out, with So saying. Sir Nigel mounted the "Ha!" said Sir Nigel. "Read on, their falcons upon their wrists and white horse of the Spanish cavalier, pray you."

of quail or leveret

The leaders sat amongst the boxwood, and took counsel together as to what they should do; while from be-low there surged up the buzz of voices, the shouting, the neighing of horses, and all the uproar of a great camp "What boots it to wait?" said Sir William Felton. "Let us ride down upon their camp before they discover

'And so say I, cried the Scottish

'For my part," said Sir Simon Bur "I think that it is madness, for you cannot hope to rout this great army; and where are you to go and what you to do when they have turned upon you?

'Nay," said Sir Nigel, 'I have a plan by which we may attempt some mall deed upon them, and yet, by the help of God, may be able to draw off again: which as Sir Simon Burley ath said, would be scarce possible in any other way.

'How then, Sir Nigel?" asked several voices. We shall lie here all day; for amid

is brushwood it is ill for them to see us. Then when evening comes we shall saily out upon them and see if we may not gain some honorable advancement from them. We shall have nightfal cover us when we draw off so that we may make our way back through mountains. I would station ore of archers here in the pass, with all our pennons jutting forth from the ocks, and as many nakirs and drums nd bugles as we have with us, so that those who follow us in the fading light, may think that the whole army of the prince is upon them, and fear to go further. What think you of my Sir Simon?

"By my troth! I think very well of "cried the prudent old commander If four hundred men must needs rur a tilt against sixty thousand, I cannot how they can do it better or more safely.

"And so say I," cried Felton, hearti "But I wish the day were over, for will be an ill thing for us if they chance to light upon us.

The words were scarce out of his mouth when there came a clatter of loose stones, the sharp clink of trotting hoofs, and a dark-faced cavalier mounted upon a white horse, burs hoofs. through the bushes and rode swritty down the valley from the end which was farthest from the Spanish camp Lightly armed, with his vizor open are a hawk perched upon his left wri: of common spies, who can scarce tell as as much of the enemy and of his forces as the prince would wish to his eyes lit upon the fierce faces which glared out at him from the brushwood. With a cry of terror, he thrust his his horse's sides, and dash ed for the narrow opening of the gorge For a moment it seemed as though he dawn they found themselves in a dark ravine, with others sloping away from it on either side, and the bare brown crags rising in long bleak terraces all dragged him from the saddle, while dragged him from the saddle, while themselves caught the frightened horse. would have reached it, for he had round them.
"If it please you, fair lord," said Black Simon, 'this man hath misled us, and since there is no tree upon which "How many cows wilt buy my mother, "How many cows wilt buy my mother

we may hang him, it might be well to hurl him over yonder cliff."

The peasant, reading the soldier's meaning in his flerce eves and harsh here. By St. Paul! it is not the first time that we have met; for, if I mis-

"You are the prisoner of the man wi took you, Sir Diego," answered Sir Ni-I---"At the instant, there rose the scream of a hundred bugles, with the deep rolling of drums and the clashing themselves before now prisoners in

ers sprang to arms, convinced some great host was upon them; but the guide dropped upon his knees and thanked Heaven for its mercies.

Big John scratched his red head and grinned in high delight when the question was propounded to him. "Tell him," said he, "that I shall have the him," said he, "th e cried. This is their morning call.

As he spoke he scrambled down one the one. Also a dress of blue sendal. As he spoke he scrambled down one of the narrow ravines, and climbing over a low ridge at the further end, he with a control of the new grindstone. Likewise a small house, with stalls for the cows and thirty-six gallons of beer for the thirsty weather.

"Tut, tut," said Sir Nigel, laughing, 'All these things may be had for monhearts beat harder and their breath ey; and I think. Don Diego, that five thousand crowns is not too much for

renowned a knight."
"It shall be duly paid him."
"For some days we must keep yo with us; and I must crave leave also to use your shield, your armor your horse. I have need of it this day, but it shall be duly returned to you. Set guards, Aylward, with arrow on tered gully. Here and there, through the string, at either end of the pass; for dense haze which surrounded them, there it may happen that some other cavaliers may visit us ere the time be

reach, the waving of ancients, pavons, sunk behind a cloud-bank in the west pensils, and banderoles, with flash of before Sir Nigel at last gave word that gold and glow of colors, proclaimed the men should resume their arms and that all the chivalry of Iberia were have their horses ready. He had him-mustered in the plain beneath them, self thrown off his armor, and had Far off, in the centre of the camp, a dressed himself from head to foot in palace of red and white silk, the harness of the captured Spaniard.

"Sir William," said he, "it is my opin gallant Henry lay there in the midst you therefore that you will lead this outfall upon the camp. As the English adventurers, peeping ride into their camp with my squire and trom behind their brushwood two archers. I pray you to watch me. two archers. I pray you to watch me, and to ride forth when I am come among the tents. You will leave twenty men behind here, and as we planned this morning, and you will ride back here after you have ventured as far

as seems good to you."
"I will do as you order. Nigel: but what is that you propose to do?"
"You will see anon, and indeed it is but a triffing matter. Alleyne, you will come with me, and lead a spare horse by the bridle. I will have the two archers who rode with us through simmering. In the open plain, clouds two archers who rode that us through of light horse galloped and swooped of stout heart. Let them ride behind of stout heart. Let them ride behind us, and let them leave their bows here among the bushes for it is not my wish that they should know that we o vou, pass on as though you heard

their greyhounds behind them, in quest and rode quietly forth from his concealment with his three companions behind him. Alleyne leading his master's own steed by the bridle. So many small parties of French and Spanish horse were sweeping hither and thither that the small band attracted little notice, and making its way at a gentle trot across the plain, they came as far s the camp without challenge hindrance. On and on they pushed past the endless lines of tents, amid the squire, the dense swarms of horsemen and of "And the footmen, until the huge royal pavilion stretched in front of them. They were lose upon it when of a sudden there broke out a wild hubbah tant portion of the camp, with screams and war-cries and all the wild tumult

rushing from their tents, knights shouted loudly for their squires, and know not whether your daughter love me, and there is no pledge between us.' At the royal tent a crowd of gorgeous dressed servants ran hither and hither in helpless panic for the guard mix in the matter; for I have ever found of soldiers who were stationed there that the Lady Maude vas very well able had already ridden off in the directo look to her own affairs. Since first tion of the alarm. A man-at-arms on she could stamp her little foot, she hath shall be not relieve them of any voy there side of the doorway were the ever been able to get that for which she below they may have upon their souls?" protectors of the royal dwelling. "I have come for the king." whispered Sir Nigel; "and, by Saint Pa just back with us or I must bid

stant by so furlous and unexpected an at-Sir Nigel dashed into the royal elong to the royal house. A crowd of us. white-faced sewers and pages swarmed at Alleyne delivered his message, and ther dventurers.

mong the Spaniards, for Sir William elton and his men had swept through alf their camp, leaving a long litter of the lead and dying to mark their course, Unertain who were their attackers, and un-ble to tell their English enemies from newly-arrived Breton allies, the Spanish knights rode wildly hither and vast uncertain multitude. Another five minutes of wild galloping over the plain, and they were all back in their gorge, while their pursuers fell back before the rolling of the English drums and blare of trumpets which seemed to produce a produce and the secret of his love. As to the gaining of knighthood, in such stirring times it was no great matter for a brave squire of gentle birth to aspire to horsemanship they both swung round in that honor. He would leave his bones a long curvet, and then plucking out their among these Spanish ravines or he would swords they leave the leaves and the plucking out their which seemed to proclaim that the whole army of the prince was

"By my soul! Nigel," cried Sir Oliver, what have we here?"

tent and wears the royal arms upon his jupon. I trust that he is the King of

nions, crowding round in amazement.
'Nay, Sir Nigel,' said Felton, peering at the prisoner through the uncertain light. "I have twice seen Henry of

The prisoner was but recovering the consciousness which had been squeezed from him by the grip of Hordle John. "If it please you," be answered, "I and nine others are the body-squires of the king, and must ever wear his arms." king, and must ever wear his arms, so as to shield him from even such perils is a hill in the center of the gorge upon s have threatened him this night. king is at the tent of the brave Du Guescin, where he will sup to night. But I am a caballero of Aragon. Don Sancho Pene-losa, and, though I be no king, I am yet back. ready to pay a fitting price for my ran-

"By Saint Paul! I will not touch your gold." cried Sir Nigel. "Go back to your master and give him greeting from Sir Nigel Loring of Twynham Castle, telling him that I had hoped to make his better acquaintance this night, and that, if I my eagerness to know so famed and courteous a kaight. Spur on, comrades! for we must cover many a league ere we can venture to light fire or to loosen girth.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was a cold, bleak morning in the ginning of March, and the mist was drift-ing in dense rolling clouds through the passes of the Cantabrian mountains. Company had passed the night in a shelboulders of rock; while high above the sea of vapor there towered up one gigantic peak, with the plak glow of the early sunshine upon its snow-capped head.

The camp was loud with laughter and merriment, for a messenger had ridden in from the prince with words of heart-stir-ring praise for what they had done, and with orders that they should still abide in the forefront of the army.

'The Lord Loring craves your attendance in his tent," said a young archer to Alleyne.

will lead this of him and a broad ribbon of parchment hundred bugles and drums, mixed with the For me, I will laid across his knees, over which he was clash of Moorish cymbals, broke forth into poring with frowning brows and pursed a proud peal of martial triumph. Strange

"It came this morning by the prince's messenger." said he, "and was brought from England by Sir John Fallislee, who

"What then?" asked the knight, peering at him anxiously. "There is nought up at him anxiously. amiss with the Lady Mary or with the Lady Maude?" "It is my brother—my poor unhappy brother!" cried Alleyne, with his hand to his brow. "He is dead."

to his brow. "By Saint Paul! I have never heard that he had shown so much love for you that you should mourn him so."
"Yet he was my brother—the only kith or kin that I had upon earth. Alast alas! He has been slain—and slain, I fear, amidst crime and violence." "Ha!" said Sir Nigel. "Read on, I

and have thee in his holy keeping. The ner which waves over the left?' Lady Loring hath asked me, the priest, "It is the ensign of the Kni so set down in writing what hath betallen Calatrava' answered reiton. at Twynham, and all that concerns the "And the one upon the r death of thy ill neighbor the Socman of Minstead. For when ye had left us, this wil man gathered around him all outlaws, illeins, and masteriess men. until they them. were come to such a force that they siew them. There is much Spanish blazonry and scattered the king's men who went also if I could but read it. Don Diego, were come to such a force that they siew against them. Then, coming forth from e woods, they laid siege to thy castle, and for two days they girt us in and sho ard against us, with such numbers as were a marvel to see. Yet the Lady Loron the ng held the place stoutly, and

cond day the Socman was slain-by is own men, as some think-so that we were delivered from their hands; for which praise be to all the saints, and ore especially to the holy Anselm, whose feast it came to pass. The Lady Loring and the Lady Maude, thy fair daughter, are in good health. May all the saints preserve thee!

"My fair lord," said Alleyne. flush on his weather-stained cheeks. love your daughter, the Lady Maude; and, unworthy as I am. I would give my blood to serve her. "By St. Paul! Edricson," said the

knight coldly, arching his eyebrows, aim high in this matter. Our blood is very 'And mine also is very old,' answered

And the Lady Maude is our single child. All our name and lands center upon "Alas! that I should say it, but I also

the only Edricson.

and then burst out a-laughing. "Faul!" said he, "I know not why I "By St to look to her own affairs. Since first craved; and if she set her heart on thee Alleyne, and thou or ", I do not think that this Spanish king, with his threescore thousand men, could hold you apart. Yet this I will say, that I would see you Alleyne and Aylward sprang from their horses, and flew at the two sentries, who were disarmed and beaten down in an in-stant by so furlous and unexpected an at-stant by so furlous and unexpected an atthat you will acquit yourself well. But

their heels, those behind pushing forwards, wandered forth from the camp, for his while the foremost shrank back from the mind was all in a whirl with this underece faces and recking weapons of the expected news, and with his talk with dventurers. The senseless body was Sir Nigel. Sitting upon a rock, with his thrown across the spare horse, the four burning brow resting upon his hands, he sprang to their saddles, and sway they thought of his brother, of their quarrel, hundered with loose reins and busy spurs of the Lady Maude in her bedraggled ridhrough the swarming camp. ing-dress, of the gray old castle, of the But confusion and disorder still reigned proud pale face in the armory, and of the last flery words with which she had sped him or his way. Then he was but a penniless, monk-bred lad, unknown and unfriended. Now he was himself Socman war to peace. of Minstead, the head of an old stock, and the Lord of an estate which, if reduced man worthy of his steel, for his opponent from its former size, was still ample to was none other than Sebastian Gomez, the preserve the dignity of his family. Further, picked lance of the monkish Knights of The mad tur- he had become a man of experience was woll, the mixture of races, and the fading ight, were all in favor of the four who lone knew their own purpose among the above all, has been listened to be the factor of the four who above all, has been listened to be the factor of the fact light, were all in favor of the four who alone knew their own purpose among the vast uncertain multitude. Another five when he told him the secret of his love.

"It is a Spanish call, my fair lord," said Black Simon.
"By my faith, said Sir Nigel, smiling,

'we may promise them some sport ere The which we might make our stand. "I marked it yester night," said Felton. of rage from a thousand voices and the "and no better spot could be found for clang of a score of bugles announced the

our purpose, for it is very steep at the Spanish onset. The whole Company, leading their

horses, passed across to the small hill which loomed up from the mist. It was indeed admirably designed for defence, for it sloped down in front, all jagged and boulder strewn, while it fell away behind in a sheer cliff of a hundred feet or more. tim that I had hoped to make his better the dequaintance this night, and that, if I plateau, with a stretch across of a hundry cagerness to know so famed and courded paces, and a depth of half as much "Unloose the horses," said Sir Nigel.

'Now order the ranks, and fling wide the banners, for our souls are God's and our bodies the king's, and

Saint George and for England!" Sir Nigel had scarcely spoken when the mist seemed to thin in the valley, and to sured away into long ragged clouds trailed from the edges of the cliffs, and the sun broke through. It gleamed and shimmered with dazzling brightness upon the armor and headpieces of a vast body loomed out huge pinnacles and jutting of horsemen who stretched across the barranca from one cliff to the other, and extended backwards until their rear-guard

were far out upon the plain beyond. Line after line, and rank after rank, they chocked the neck of the valley with a long vista of tossing pennons, twinkling lances, waving plumes and streaming banderoles, while the curvets and gambades of the chargers lent a constant mo-tion and shimmer to the glittering, manycolored mass. A yell of exultation, and a forest of waving steel through the length and breadth of their column, announced cushion, with his legs crossed in front f him and a broad ribbon of parchment aid across his knees, over which it was to these gallant and sparking cavaliers of Spain to look upon this handful of men upon the aill, the thin lines of bowmen, the knots of knights and men-at-arms
with armor rusted and discolored from long
service, and to learn that these were indeed the soldiers whose fame and prow-Alleyne turned to the letter, and, as his eyes rested upon it, his face turned pale deed the soldiers whose fame and prowers of surprise and grief burst from the composite talk of every less had been the camp-fire talk of every less had been talk of every less had been the camp-fir they stood, leaning upon their bows, while their leaders took counsel together from their stern rank, but in the center waved the leopards of England, on the right the ensign of their Company with a small the singers and crosshowmen among the rocks, aiming mainly at those who had swarmed up the cliffs and burst-ing into laughter and cheers when a well-aimed shaft brought one of their opponents right the ensign of their Company with the roses of Loring, and on the left over three score of Weish bowman, there float the score of Weish bowman there float the score of Weish bowman the red.

'God be with thee, my honored lord, among them. What is this golden ban-"It is the ensign of the Knights of

upon the right?" 'It marks the Knights of Santiago and

see by the banner that the grand master rides at their head." 'You are right, for I can also you know the arms of your own country and who are they who have done us se

The Spanish prisoner looked with exul tant eyes upon the deep and serried ranks of his countrymen.

"By Saint James" he said, "if ye fail this day, ye fall by no mean hands for the flower of the army of Castile ride under the banner of Don Tello, with chivalry of Asturias, Toledo, Leon, dova, Galicia and Seville and the knights of France and Aragon. If you will take rede, you will come to a composi-with them, for they will give you my rede,

such terms as you have given me."
"Nay, by Saint Paul, it were pity if so many brave men, were drawn together and no little deed of arms come of it. Ha Ha! William, they advance upon us. and by my soul it is a sight worth coming over seas to witness.

Calatrava on the one side and of Santiago against them. Horse and spear on the other , came swooping swiftly down a long bow-shot from the hill, and with waving spears and vaunting shouts challenged their enemies to come forth. "And why have I not heard this from two cavaliers, pricking forward from the you before. Alleyne? In sooth, I think glittering ranks, walked their horses slowtwo cavaliers, pricking forward from the ly between the two arrays with targets braced and lances in rest like the chal-

lengers in a tourney.
"By Saint Paul!" eried Sir Nigel, with his eye glowing like an ember, "these appear to be two very worthy and debo nair gentlemen. I do not call to mind when I have seen any people who seemed of so great a heart and so high of enter-prise. We have our horses, Sir William prise. We have our horses, Sir Williams, shall be not relieve them of any vow which

Felton's reply was to bound upon his charger, and to urge it down the slope, while Sir Nigel followed not three spear's lengths behind him. It was a rugged ourse, rocky and uneven, yet knights, choosing their men, dashed on wards at the top of their speed, the gallant Spaniards flew as swiftly to meet them. The one to whom Felton found himself opposed was a tall stripling tent, and was followed by Hordle John as enough of such trifles, for we have our with a stag's head upon his shield, while work before us, and it will be time to speak of this matter when we see the white cliffs of England once more. Go to detend with blood, while John bore over his shoulder the senseless body of a man whose gray surcoat, adorned with the lions and towers of Castile, proclaimed him to leions and towers of Castile, procla soon as the horses had been secured. From work before us, and it will be time to Sir Nigel's man was broad and squat, with the ground. Carried away by the heat and madness of fight, the English knight never drew rein, but charged straight on into the array of the Knights of Calatrava. time the silent ranks upon the hill could see a swiri and eddy deep down in the heart of the Spanish column, with a circle of rearing chargers and flashing blades. Here and there tossed the white plume of the English belmet, rising and falling like the foam upon a wave, with the flerce gleam and sparkle ever circling round it, until at last it had sunk from

tmong these Spanish ravines, or he would swords they lashed at each other like two do some deed which would call the eyes lusty smiths hammering upon their anvil f men upon him.

Alleyne was still seated on the rock, his ing and striking, while the two blades griefs and his joys drifting swiftly over wheeled and whizzed and circled in gleams his mind like the shadow of clouds upon of dazzling light. Cut, parry, and thrust "It is a prisoner whom I have taken, and in sooth, as he came from the royal which came booming up to him through last coming thigh to thigh, they cast their the fog. He shouted an alarm to the arms around each other and rolled off camp. cried the com-in amazement. "It is a great body of horse," said SIr William Felton, "and they are riding very his sword to slay him, while a shout of "It is a great body of horse," said Sir Spaniard threw himself upon his enemy The Company stood peering into the triumph rose from the ranks of his count dense fog wreath, amidst a silence so rymen. But the fatal blow never fell, for light. "I have twice seen Henry of Transtamare, and certes this man in no way resembles him. "Who are you, fellow?" he added in Spanish, "and how is it that you dare to wear the arms of Castile?"

The prisoner was but recovering the light to the process of the profound that the dripping of the water profound that the dripping of the water from the rocks and the breathing of the horses grew loud upon the ear. Suddenly his side, with the blood gushing from his arm-pit and from the slit of his vizor. Sir Nigel sprang to his feet with his bloody and the profound that the dripping of the water from the rocks and the breathing of the horses grew loud upon the ear. Suddenly his side, with the blood gushing from his arm-pit and from the slit of his vizor. Sir Nigel sprang to his feet with his bloody are also below. dagger in his left hand and gazed down upon his adversary, but the fatal and udden stab in the vital spot, which the Spaniard had exposed by raising his arm, had proved instantly mortal. The Englishman leaped upon his horse and made for the hill, at the very instant that a yell

CHAPTER XVII.

But the islanders were ready and eager the encounter. With feet, firmly planted, their sleeves rolled back to give free play to their muscles, their long yellow bow-staves in their left hands, and their quivers slung to the front, they had waited in the four-deep harrow formation which gave strength to their array, and yet permitted every man to draw his arrow freely without harm to those in front.

On swept the Spaniards, over the level and up to the slope, ere they met the blinding storm of the English arrows. Down went the whole ranks in a white of mad confusion, horses plunging and kicking, bewildered men falling, rising, staggering on or back, while ever new lines of horsemen came spurring through the gaps and urged their chargers up the fatal slope. All around him, Alleyne could hear the stern, short orders of the master bowmen, while the air was filled with the keen twanging of the strings and the swish and patter of the shafts. Right across the foot of the hill there had sprung up a long wall of struggling horses and stricken men, which ever grew and heightened as fresh squadrons poured on the attack. So for five long minutes the gallant horsemen of Spain and of France strove ever and again to force a passage, until the low wailing note of a bugle called them back, and they rode slowly out of bow-shot, leaving their best and their Lord of Angus, the left." bravest in the ghastly, blood-mottled heap behind them.

But there was little rest for the victors Whilst the knights had charged them in the slingers had crept round upon either flank and had gained a footing upon the cliffs and behind the outlying rocks. A storm of stones broke suddenly upon the defenders, who, drawn up in lines at-arms were struck down at the same moment. The others lay on their faces to avoid the deadly hall, while at each side of the plateau a fringe of bowmen exchanged shots with the slingers and crossbowme

ed the red banner of Merlin with the red-bar's heads of the Buttesthorns. Gravelog and sedately they stood before the morning sun, waiting for the onslaught of their foemen.

"By Saint Paul," said Sir Nigel, gazing with puckered eye down the valley, "there appear to be some very worthy people with a purchase of the some very worthy people with a hurt."

"By Saint Paul!" quoth Sir Nigel, plucking the patch from his eye, "I think that I am now clear of my vow, for this Spanish knight was a person from whom much bonor might be won. Indeed, he was a very worthy gentleman, of good courage, and great hardiness, and it grieves me that he should have come by "I see it."

"By Saint Paul!" quoth Sir Nigel, brought us we might hold the crest until it comes. See yonder horses which stray among the rocks beneath us?"

"And see yonder path which winds along the hill upon the further end of the valley?"

"I see it."

"Were you on those horses, and riding

"Nigell" cried Sir Simon Burley, hurry ing up with consternation upon his tace. "Aylward tells me that there are not 'Aylward tells me that ten score arrows left in all their sheaves. See! they are springing from their horses,

and cutting their sofierets that they may rush upon us. Might we not even now make a retreat? "My soul will retreat from my body nrst. am, and here i bide, while God gives me

"And so say 1." shouted Sir Oliver, throwing his mace high into the air and catching it again by the handle.

"To your arms, men. cried Sir Nigel. Shoot while you may and then out sword. and let us ave or die together! then uprose from the min in the rugged

anabrian variey a sound such as had not cen heard in those parts before, nor was again, until the screams which rippled and the rocks had been frozen by over our hundred winters and thawed by as many returning springs. Deep and full and strong it thundered down the ravine. the derce battle-call of a warrior race, the iast stern welcome to who so should join with them in that world-old game where the stake is death. Thrice it swelled torth

and thrice it sank away, echoing and reverberating amidst the crags. Then, with set faces, the Company rose up among the As he spoke the two wings of the Span- storm of stones, and looked down upon the ish host, consisting of the Knights of thousands who sped swiftly up the slope set aside, but on foot, with sword and batthe valley, while the main body followed tle-axe, their broad shields slung in front more slowly behind. The vanguard halted of them, the chivalry of Spain rushed to of them, the chivalry of Spain rushed to the attack. And now arose a struggle so fell, so long,

so evenly sustained, that even now the memory of it is handed down amongst the Calabrian mountaineers, and the ill-omened knoll is still pointed out by their children as the "Altura de los Ingleos," where the men from across the seas fought the great fight with the knights of the south. The last arrow was quickly shot, nor could the slingers hurl their stones, so close were friend and foe. From side to side stretched the thin line of the English, lightly armed and quick-footed. while against it stormed and raged the pressing throng of flery Spaniards and of gallant Bretons. The clink of crossing sword-blades, the dull thudding of heavy blows, the panting and gasping of weary and wounded men, all rose together in wild, long-drawn note, which swelled upwards to the ears of the wondering peasants who looked down from the edges of the cliffs upon the swaying turmoil of the battle beneath them. Back and forward reeled the leopard banner borne up the slope by the rush and weight of the onslaught, now pushing downwards again as and Black Simon, with their veteran menat-arms, flung themselves madly into the fray. Alleyne, at his lord's right hand found himself swept hither and thither in the desperate struggle, exchanging savage thrusts one instant with a Spanish cavalier, and the next torn away by the whirl of men and dashed up against some new antagonist. To the right Sir Oliver, Aylward, Hordle John, and the bowmen the Company fought furiously against the monkish Knights of Santiago, who were led up the hill by their prior-a great-deephested man, who were a brown monastic habit over his suit of mail. Three archers he slew in three giant strokes, but Sir Oliver flung his arms round him, and the two, staggering and straining, reeled back-wards and fell, locked in each other's grasp, over the edge of the steep cliff which flanked the bill. In vain his knights stormed and raved against the thin line which marred their path; the sword of Aylward and the great axe of John gleamed in the forefront of the battle and huge jagged pieces of rock, hurled by strong arms of the bowmen, crashed and hurtled amid their ranks, Slowly they gave back down the hill, hanging upon their skirts, with a long litter of writhing and twisted figures to mark the course which they had taken

Welshmen upon the left, led on by the Scotch earl. sheltered them, and by the fury of their outfall had driven the Spaniards in front of them in headlong flight down the bill. In the centre only things seemed to be going ill with the defenders. was down-dying, as he would wish to have died, like a grim old wolf in its lair with a ring of his slain around him. Twice Sir Nigel had been overborne, and twice Alleyne had fought over him until he had staggered to his feet once more. Burley lay senseless, stunned by a blow from a mace, and half of the men-at-arms lay littered upon the ground around him. Sir Nigel's shield was broken, his crest shorn. his armor cut and smashed, and the vizo torn from his helmet; yet he sprang hither and thither with light foot and read hand, engaging two Bretons and a Span-iard at the same instant thrusting, stooping, dashing in springing out—while Alleyne still fought by his side, stemming with a handful of men the flerce tide which surged up against them. Yet it would have fared ill with them had not the archers from either side closed in upon the flanks of the attackers, and pressed them very slowly and foot by foot down the long slope, until they were on the plain once more, where their fellows were already rallying for a fresh assault,

But terrible indeed was the cost at which the last had been repelled. Of the three hundred and seventy held the crest, one hundred and seventy two were left standing, many of whom were sorely wounded and weak from loss of blood, Sir Oliver Buttesthorn, Richard Causton, Sir Simon Burley, Black Simon, Johnston, a hundred and fifty archers, and forty-seven men-at-arms had fallen, while the pitiless hail of stones was already whizzing and piping once more about their ears, threatening every instant to further reduce their numbers Sir Nigel looked about him at his shatsoldier's pride.

"By St. Paul!" he cried, "I have fought in many a little bickering, but never one that I would be more loth to have missed than this. But you are wounded, Alleyne?"
"It is nought," answered his squire, stanching the blood which dripped from a sword-cut across his forehead.

"These gentlemen of Spain seem to most courteous and worthy people. I see that they are already forming to continues this debate with us. Form up the bowme two deep instead of four. By my faith! some very brave men have gone from among us. Aylward, you are a trusty soldier, for all that your shoulder has never felt accolade, nor your heels worn the

"Ho! for Sir Samkin Aylward!" cried rough voice among the archers, and a oar of laughter greeted their new leader "By my hilt!" said the old bowman, " never thought to lead a wing in a strick-en field. Stand close, camarades, for, by hese finger-bones! we must play the man

this day. "Come hither, Alleyne," said Sir Nigel, walking back to the edge of the cliff which formed the rear of their position. "And you; Norbury," he continued, beck-oning to the squire of Sir Oliver, "do you

come here. The two squires hurried across to him and the three stood looking down into the rocky ravine which lay a hundred and fifty feet beneath them.

"The prince must hear of how things are with us," said the knight. "Another onfall we may withstand, but they are many and we are few, so that the time must come when we can no longer form line across the hill. Yet if help were